DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 030 RE 002 821

AUTHOR Rauch, Sidney J.
TITLE Using Paraprofessionals as Reading Aides.
PUB DATE May 70
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the International Reading Association conference, Anaheim, Cal., May 6-9, 1970

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.80
DESCRIPTORS Inservice Education, *Paraprofessional School Personnel, Personnel Evaluation, *Personnel Selection, Preservice Education, *Reading Instruction, *Teacher Aides

ABSTRACT

The use of paraprofessionals in the schools has been accepted on a nationwide scale. It is no longer a question of whether they should be used in the classroom but how best to prepare them and to use their talents and potential. The author offers suggestions and guidelines for accomplishing these goals. Topics covered were (1) selection, including such precautions as (a) making sure everyone concerned knows that the classroom teacher is in charge and (b) correctly teaming classroom teacher and paraprofessional; (2) preparation of paraprofessionals as reading aides and provision for their advancement; (3) the instructional program (preservice and inservice), including a suggested listing of basic topics to be covered; (4) reading jobs for the paraprofessional; and (5) teacher evaluation of paraprofessionals, including a sample evaluation form. A bibliography is included. (NH)

ED040030

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Sidney J. Rauch
Hofstra University
Hempstead, New York 11550

Using Paraprofessionals as Reading Aides

Whenever a professional organization such as the International Reading Association or a group of licensed teachers participates in the training program of paraprofessionals or teacher-aides, a cry usually arises from a professional, "You're creating instant teachers or reading specialists. How can you do it?" The answer is simple. "We can't do it and we're not doing it, but the need is desperate and we must help." This philosophy is expressed by Rauch (7) in the Handbook for the Volunteer Tutor: (Substitute "paraprofessional" for "volunteer tutor")

"The volunteer tutor for the most part is not a trained teacher, reading teacher, or reading specialist. He may possess essential intangibles (desire, zeal, understanding), but he is not a trained technician. In many instances he will be working with children, adolescents, or adults who require the services of a reading specialist with advanced training, but such services are not available. Can one

RE002 821

afford to do nothing or just wait around hoping for the skilled teacher to appear on the scene? The answer is an obvious, "No." There are hundreds of thousands of individuals who need help, and the only persons who can offer this assistance are volunteer tutors. One must attempt to make the most of these dedicated people who have offered their services. But one must supply them with some background and training. It is the hope that this handbook will furnish some of the answers."

We have reached the stage where the use of paraprofessionals has been accepted on a nationwide scale. One report estimates that one elementary teacher in five in the United States has at least the part-time services of an assistant (1). A 1967 report of the California Teachers Association indicated that at least one-third of all school districts were then using some teacher-aides (2). The most recent, but unofficial reports, estimate that 15,000 paraprofessionals are being used in New York City schools. On the basis of the writer's observations, it would not be considered venturesome to predict that surveys of the 1969-70 school year will show even larger numbers of paraprofessionals being used in the classrooms. No longer is it a question of whether we should use paraprofessionals, but how best to prepare them and to use their talents and potential. Don Davies (3), Associate Commissioner for Personnel Development in the U. S. Office of Education, realistically described the values and limitations of auxiliary personnel as follows:

"The introduction of auxiliary personnel into a school system may provide more individualized education for children and youth, may make possible a more flexible structure in the classroom, may make the job of teachers more manageable and productive, may serve to link school

and community more closely, and may induce a reassessment of all the roles in education. On the other hand, auxiliaries may be introduced into a given school system without any of these effects. Auxiliary personnel are nobody's magic answer. Their potential contribution to the quality of education will not be realized automatically."

The Selection of Paraprofessionals

In response to the question, "How much formal education should the paraprofessional have?" one supervisor replied, "The number of years of formal education is secondary. I'm looking for decent, sympathetic human beings who can relate to children." The applicant must be literate. Academic requirements and the results of written examinations or standardized tests should be secondary or minor considerations. Personal qualities and characteristics that reveal an ability to relate to and understand children are far more important criteria. Harris (5) in discussing the characteristics of good remedial teachers, also emphasized the human qualities:

"The most important single characteristic of a good remedial teacher is his real liking for children. The liking must be genuine - the children quickly detect the difference between a warm, friendly person and one who puts on a show of friendliness without really feeling that way. Appearance, dress, age, speech, theoretical knowledge, experience - all these are less important than a genuine fondness for children as they are, complete with their faults and annoying habits."

Since many of the jobs of the paraprofessional as reading aide relate to the one-to-one relationship or working with small groups, it is important that a real liking for children be evident. Another factor that must be given serious consideration is the paraprofessional's ability and willingness to follow the teacher's plan and directions. In plain language, the teacher is in charge in the classroom and there should be no debate about this fact. It has been the unhappy experience of the writer to observe one paraprofessional program "go under" because of the assumption made by a few paraprofessionals that they were the equal of teachers in training, insight, and experience after thirty hours in the classroom. Happily, this incident has proven to be the rare exception in a long series of successful programs. One final precaution: the teaming of the licensed teacher with the paraprofessional must consider the background and personalities of each. The thought of combining a confident, aggressive paraprofessional with a timid, insecure teacher is like striking a match on a powder keg. The arrangements must be made with the understanding that the "teams" are not necessarily permanent, and that changes can be made.

Preparing Paraprofessional as Reading Aides

A successful program involves pre-service and continuing in-service training. But the training program and utilization of paraprofessionals must not become a "dead-end" in terms of career development. There must be promise and assurance of advancement for

for paraprofessionals as they progress in terms of training and experience. The Division of Teacher Education and Certification (4), New York State Education Department, has stated five basic premises for career development of auxiliary personnel. These are:

"1. That the involvement of persons with a wide range of skills, training, experience, background, and potential may provide a better learning environment than the assignment of all educational tasks in a classroom to one person who, alone, must attempt to meet the individual needs of many pupils.

2. That participation in the learning-teaching process of persons from the neighborhood served by the school, particularly parents, may increase home-school-child interaction.

3. That broad community involvement in planning educational programs may contribute materially to the social relevance of such planning -- i.e. relevance to the needs, interests and real concerns of the school population.

4. That the opportunity of career development for auxiliaries may serve to motivate them in two distinct but interrelated ways: (a) in terms of their personal growth and ability to cope with life situations; (b) in terms of their increased competence on the job.

5. That the establishment of a new career line for auxiliaries may foster career development for the total educational enterprise, with new leadership roles at various occupational levels and increased motivation for professional growth throughout the system."

The Instructional Program (Pre-service and Inservice)

The training program should involve both the paraprofessional and the licensed personnel (teachers and supervisors) with whom they will be working. This will enable all parties to get to know one another, and to sense the possibilities for working as a team. Emphasis should be placed on realistic, practical classroom situations, using demonstrations and role-playing as teaching techniques. Where possible, the use of multi-media and the analysis of audio and video taped performances of classroom activities should be essential features of the training program.

A suggested listing of basic topics follows:

1. The role of paraprofessionals as reading aides
   a. Responsibilities as a working member of school-community team
   b. Relationship with classroom teachers
   c. Establishing rapport with students
   d. Expectations and limitations of auxiliary personnel
2. The nature of the reading process
   a. Definitions of reading
   b. Reading as a language art
   c. Reading as basic to education
3. Why pupils fail in reading
   a. Social and emotional factors
   b. Intellectual factors
   c. Physical factors
   d. Educational factors

4. Reading jobs of the paraprofessional (see following section)
   a. Use of games, workbooks, kits, basal readers, etc.
   b. Using audio-visual materials in the classroom
   c. Demonstrations of classroom activities
   d. Analysis of audio-video tapes
5. The fundamentals of reading
   a. Word recognition skills
   b. Basic comprehension skills
6. Encouraging personal and recreational reading
   a. Methods and materials for motivating students
   b. Working knowledge of some basic "high-interest, low-vocabulary" books
   c. Story-telling techniques
   d. Reading interests of young children and adolescents
   e. Ways of reporting on books
7. Classroom organization
   a. Principles of grouping
   b. Types of grouping
   c. Individualizing instruction
8. Case studies and conferences
   a. Children who require special help and why
   b. Practices and techniques that have proven helpful

Reading Jobs of the Paraprofessional

In a recent evaluation of a Long Island, New York, school system, the writer included among his recommendations the following:

"The evaluator is a firm believer in the use of teacher-aides or paraprofessionals in the classroom, particularly in Grades K-3. For the two or three pupils who require help in the following directions, for the

two or three pupils who need a story read aloud, for the two or three pupils who need help in getting and returning materials - these are instances where the paraprofessional can be of great assistance. The use of paraprofessionals generally leads to closer ties with the community and a better understanding of the educational process. (Note: the above recommendation implies a pre-service and continuing inservice program for paraprofessionals.)"

A listing of some of the reading jobs that can be performed by the paraprofessional are:

1. Listening to a student read or tell a story
2. Reading stories aloud to the individual child or small group
3. Preparing "Personal Language Charts" (see Learning to Read Through Experience, Second Edition, by Lee and Allen (6)
4. Helping a student select a book from the class or school library
5. Helping the slow learner follow directions as he does a workbook assignment
6. Assisting the gifted child in locating special materials for an extra assignment
7. Preparing ditto sheets or other materials to reinforce instruction
8. Playing word games with individuals or small groups
9. Helping children look up information
10. Correcting workbook or home assignments
11. Supervising seat work or make-up assignments
12. Supervising work areas and committee activities
13. Helping children who missed instruction because of illness or other reasons

14. Directing remedial drill work
15. Listening to and evaluating book reports
16. Filing and cataloging books
17. Operating audio-visual equipment
18. Playing games with children
19. Helping pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children to use crayons, scissors, paste or paint
20. Showing children how to distribute and collect materials.

In addition to the above, there are many clerical and classroom management tasks that can be taken care of by the paraprofessional. As one teacher commented on the value of teacher aides, "By just being available when I needed that extra hand ... No matter how much we stress training in self-direction, there are always one or two children who need that extra help. That's where the paraprofessional comes in."

Teacher Evaluation of Paraprofessionals

A teacher evaluation form is included in this paper to list and summarize those areas in which both the teacher and paraprofessional can work together, and, hopefully, make a genuine contribution to the education of all children and to the community. Permission to use or adapt this evaluation form may be obtained by writing to the Superintendent of Schools, Amityville Public Schools, Amityville, New York.

TEACHER EVALUATION OF TEACHER AIDE PROGRAM*

Date:_____

Name:_____

Building_____Class_____No. of Children_____

S - Satisfactory
NH - Needs help
U - Unsatisfactory
NO - No opportunity to observe performance

Please check the most appropriate category:	S	NH	U	NO
I. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS				
A. Appearance and Manner				
✓ 1. Dresses appropriately				
2. Is well groomed				
3. Is poised				
4. Speaks clearly with well modulated voice, using good English				
✓ 5. Shows genuine respect, concern and warmth for adults and children				
✓ 6. Tries to improve her work				
✓ B. Staff Relationships				
✓ 7. Cooperates with teacher				
✓ 8. Accepts constructive criticism or recognition gracefully				
✓ 9. Uses discretion in speaking of school and/or colleagues				
✓ 10. Accepts responsibility delegated by the teacher				
II. PERFORMANCE				
✓ 11. Follows the teacher's plans and directions				

*Reproduced with permission of the Amityville Public Schools, Amityville, New York.

	S	NH	U	NO
✓ 12. Helps maintain an attractive, healthful classroom with work areas arranged for maximum pupil stimulation and accomplishment				
✓ 13. Has genuine concern for all pupils regardless of their social, ethnic, intellectual or economic status				
✓ 14. Helps maintain discipline by guiding pupil in self-control and a respect for the rights of others				
✓ 15. Helps pupil satisfactorily as directed by the teacher				
✓ 16. Helps children to work properly in classroom situations				
✓ 17. Is acquainted with and uses instructional materials				
Please rate the aide on her total performance in the following types of duties:				
18. Clerical				
19. Preparation of materials				
20. Working in one-to-one relationship with pupils				
21. Working with small groups				
22. Housekeeping				

Please either check the appropriate category or complete the following:

III. ADJUSTMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

23. The children react to the aide:

favorably____ unfavorably____ neither____

24. I have established a positive relationship with the aide with:

no difficulty____ little difficulty____ much difficulty____

25. The aide is sensitive to the needs of the children:

very sensitive____ sensitive____ not sensitive____

26. It took _____ for the aide to feel comfortable in the classroom.
No. of days

27. The children are confused because there are too many adults in the classroom.

    not at all____ a little____ very____

IV. USEFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM

28. The time I am able to devote to instructional activities since my aide is in the classroom is:

    increased____ the same____ less____

29. The aide is helpful in working with some of the more difficult children in the classroom:

    very____ a little____ not at all____

30. The number of hours the aide is assigned to the classroom is:

    too short____ about right____ too long____

31. The overall job the aide does is:

    satisfactory____ unsatisfactory____

32. The following are some tasks the aide performs:

    _____

    _____

    _____

33. Since the aide is in the classroom, we spend more time on:

    _____

    _____

    _____

34. I would like my aide to continue to work in my classroom:

    yes____ no____

35. I would rather work without an aide:

    yes____ no____

36. I would like a different aide to be assigned to me:

    yes____ no____

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Recommended Books and Pamphlets for Pre-service and Inservice Training

Division of Teacher Education and Certification. Guidelines for Career Development of Auxiliary Personnel in Education (1st ed.) Albany, New York: The State Education Department, June 1968.

Janowitz, Gayle. Helping Hands: Volunteer Work in Education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.

Pearl, Arthur and Frank Riessman. New Careers for the Poor: The Non-Professional in Human Service. New York: Free Press, 1965.

Pope, Lillie. Guidelines to Teaching Remedial Reading to the Disadvantaged. New York: Book-Lab, Inc. (1449 37th Street, Brooklyn 11218), 1967.

Rauch, Sidney J. (Ed.). Handbook for the Volunteer Tutor. Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1969.

Riessman, Frank. Strategies Against Poverty. New York: Random House, 1969.

Sleisenger, Lenore. Guidebook for the Volunteer Reading Teacher. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1965.

Books Describing Reading Skills, Methods and Classroom Activities

Botel, Morton. How to Teach Reading. Chicago: Follett 1962.

Cohen, S. Alan. Teach Them All to Read. New York: Random House, 1969.

De Boer, John J., and Martha Dallman. The Teaching of Reading (rev. ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Durkin, Dolores. Teaching Them To Read. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1970.

Books Describing Reading Skills, Methods and Classroom Activities (con't.)

Ellison, Douglas A., Phillip L. Harris, Larry W. Barber, and Renie B. Adams. Ginn Tutorial. Boston: Ginn, 1968.

Gray, William S. On Their Own in Reading (rev. ed.). Chicago: Scott, Foresman, 1960.

Harris, Albert J. How to Increase Reading Ability (5th ed.). New York: David McKay, 1970.

Heilman, Arthur W. Phonics in Proper Perspective (2nd ed.). Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969.

Heilman, Arthur W. Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading (2nd ed.). Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1967.

Karlin, Robert. Teaching Reading in the High School. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.

Kottmeyer, William. Teacher's Guide for Remedial Reading. St. Louis: Webster Div., McGraw-Hill, 1959.

Lee, Dorris M., and R. V. Allen. Learning to Read Through Experience (2nd.ed). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963.

Otto, Wayne, and Richard McMenemy. Corrective and Remedial Teaching: Principles and Practices. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.

Spache, George D. and Evelyn B. Spache. Reading in the Elementary School (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1969.

Strang, Ruth, Constance M. McCullough, and Arthur E. Traxler. The Improvement of Reading (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967.

Tinker, Miles A., and Constance M. McCullough. Teaching Elementary Reading (3rd. ed.). New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1968.

Wilson, Robert M. Diagnostic and Remedial Reading for Classroom and Clinic. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1967.